Advisory Council Members

Present: at this meeting in BOLD PRINT

Gina Moran – California State Parks – District Superintendent
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Chris Peregrin – TRNERR – Reserve Manager
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Andy Yuen – SDNWRC – Project Leader
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Brian Collins – USFWS – Refuge Manager
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Mike McCoy – SWIA – President
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Anna Shepherd – US Naval Base Coronado – Community Plans and Liaison Officer
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Chris Helmer – City of Imperial Beach – Environmental and Natural Resources Director
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Catherine Rom – City of San Diego – Transportation & Storm Water Division
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Doug Liden – USEPA – Environmental Engineer
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Amber Craig – USBP – Public Lands Liaison Agent
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Dawi Dakhil – USIBWC – Project Manager
    619-405-4224, dawi.dakhil@ibwc.gov

Mike Verderber – SD County Parks – Supervising Park Ranger
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Sam Jenniches – State Coastal Conservancy – Project Manager
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Michelle Jesperson – California Coastal Commission representative
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Program Managers Present:

Lorena Warner-Lara – Assistant Reserve Manager (Stewardship) – TRNERR
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Kristen Goodrich – Coastal Training Program Coordinator – TRNERR
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Jeff Crooks – Research Coordinator – TRNERR
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Marya Ahmad – Education Specialist – TRNERR
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Members of the Public

Dave Francis, Resident
David Waller, Resident
Vivian Marquez-Waller, Resident
Maria Teresa Fernandez, Friends of Friendship Park
Dick Pilgrim, Resident, Friends of SD Wildlife Refuges
Joe Ellis, Public
Karla Langham, Rep. Juan Vargas
Jill Terp, USFWS SDNWR
Emma Reese, TRVEA, Resident
Cassidy Walker, TRNERR

A. **1:04 Meeting was called to order**

B. **AGENDA** – Chris Peregrin added a presentation update on the Nelson Sloan Quarry Restoration Project. The addition and remaining draft agenda were approved.

C. **LAST MEETING MINUTES** - Meeting minutes were adopted.

D. **Member Comments**

Gina Moran – California State Parks – District Superintendent
  i. Introduced herself as the new Superintendent for CA State Parks SD Coast District. She was most recently in the Colorado Desert District which included Anza Borrego, Palomar Mountain and Cuyamaca Rancho State Parks. Her background is in Natural Resources Management. She was in San Diego about 25 years ago when the habitat conservation plans were being established and is happy to see the progress that has taken place.

Anna Shepherd – US Naval Base Coronado – Community Plans and Liaison Officer
  i. The Navy has a new Environmental Director, Sarah Coppel. She came on duty this week filling the recently vacant position, she has a compliance background.
Amber Craig – USBP
  i. The construction of the border fence for this section of the border is almost finished. The remaining work that needs to be done involves the installation of the gates which will require additional engineering due to the new fence sections being much heavier than the previously existing fence.
  ii. USBP is still in collaboration with all of the agencies who are working on solutions for the Tijuana River sewage contamination.

Mike Verderber – SD County Parks Supervising Ranger
  i. San Diego County was awarded a grant to obtain Urban Corps for the last two weeks of November and the first week of December of this year. They will be doing some trail work such as, D.G. reconstruction and vegetation management.
  ii. The county park has hosted numerous soccer and baseball games at the ball fields on Sunset Ave.

Catherine Rom – City of San Diego – Transportation & Storm Water Division
  i. Hydrology and hydraulics study Phase 2 (in partnership with Army Corps of Engineers): data collection ended at the beginning of October and the modeling efforts are on target to be completed by September 2020. Chris Peregrin asks if information provided from the UC Irvine FloodRise study was incorporated into the modelling.

Chris Helmer – City of Imperial Beach
  i. The Imperial Beach Boulevard Enhancement Project continues; the work is on schedule to finish by spring of 2020.
  ii. The work on Palm Ave with California American Water should be finished within the next three to four months. SDG&E is doing work on highway 75; it will be about one more year.

Mike McCoy – SWIA – President
  i. We are moving forward with grants and contracts for the Reserve and San Diego Bay and up the coast. We are just trying to hold everything together with the organization and agencies.

Andy Yuen – USFWS – Project Leader
  i. Thank you to Customs and Border Protection for providing $1,000,000 for the Southern Border Fuel Management Initiative Projects. The Refuges will be working in cooperation with CBP and FWS Office of Wildland Fire to improve visibility in the border areas of the Tijuana River (Tijuana Slough NWR) and the Sweetwater River (San Diego NWR). The projects also provides an opportunity for the refuge to control non-native invasive weeds such as arundo and tamarisk. We are in the process of awarding a cooperative agreement to the California Conservation Corps to complete the work. The work at the Sweetwater River will take three years and at the Tijuana River will take two years.
ii. Thank you to Navy Community Plans Liaison for helping acquire the permits to fly drones in the airspace of the Naval Outlying Landing Field. The drone flights which are completed helped us with vegetation mapping and the data is being processed at this time.

iii. We are also finalizing our environmental compliance for the application of herbicides.

Michelle Jesperson – California Coastal Commission representative
   i. No update at this time.

E. Program Manager Reports

Chris Peregrin – Reserve Manager Report – TRNERR
   i. On October 31, many from the Advisory Council attended a meeting with the USEPA in partnership with the NADBANK. The focus of this meeting was to talk about the Tijuana River Valley Diversion Study and about solutions to reduce the number of days of transboundary or polluted flows. In regards to this Doug Liden, USEPA, is being assigned to a position in the City of Tijuana to work with the consulate there and will be a valuable asset to work with Mexican agencies on the pollution problems.
   
   ii. CA State Parks SD Coast District has a new Public Safety Superintendent, Nicole Van Doren. Our law enforcement officers at Silver Strand State Beach and Border Field State Park report to the Public Safety Superintendent for this region.
   
   iii. The Reserve has been successful in getting elected officials, and agencies with high level administrators to the Tijuana River Valley to share what the Reserve is doing and seeing how their programs fit.
        August 8, visit from NOAA administrators, Sea Grant officials, and joined by congressional representatives from Vargas, Davis, and Harris’s offices.
        September 11, visit from the USEPA Federal Water Resources Council Members who has some jurisdiction over water quality at the highest level.
        September 25, California EPA toured the valley. Their new manager for the border office, Yana Garcia is already coordinating the Resources Agency, California State Parks, the Lieutenant Governor’s office, and others in looking at the issues in the Tijuana River Valley and has initiated monthly or bi-weekly meetings of state level departments that have some management authority over the Tijuana River Valley issues.
   
   iv. On October 7, the Reserve Manager and District Superintendent attended the San Diego Rivers Conservancy – Tijuana River stakeholders group. The Sweetwater, Otay, and Tijuana Rivers, in response to legislation introduced by Senator Atkins, will now be affiliated as consortiums with action plans for each river and access to grant money and other state funded programs.
   
   v. The Ocean Protection Council is bringing together stakeholders around the plastic pollution problem. The Reserve Manager attended the kick-off meeting on October 21. They will be looking at how the State of California will deal with ocean litter, especially plastic.
vi. On October 30, the Reserve & Refuge met with the County of San Diego about the campground that is planned for the Tijuana River Valley. It will be located adjacent to Monument Road and just east of Border Field State Park and the ground breaking may be as soon as spring of 2020. The County is developing a management plan to address the possible impacts to the National Estuarine Research Reserve.

vii. Following up on the USEPA meeting, it appeared that once they completed the diagnostic study they gave the prioritizing decisions back to the community stakeholders. Essentially, the EPA prompted the community to encourage them in what is the best response. The cities of Imperial Beach and San Diego, the County of San Diego and the Port seemed to be unified around a proposal that would divert up to 163 million gallons a day of Tijuana River flow into a new treatment plant and then send the treated water into the existing outfall. This will probably require a new waste water plant and the diversion of a significant increased volume of water.

Brian Collins –Refuge Manager Report – USFWS

i. In reference to the Tijuana River stakeholder meeting, there is a great interest that implies that there will be significant potential investment to deal with the sewage control conditions on both sides of the border.

ii. It is encouraging to hear from the County representative reporting on SB507 funding that, added to the other 26 projects in the Tijuana River Valley is a 27th, the Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program. This project, unlike the others, is not an engineering project but a natural approach to tidal restoration.

iii. The San Diego Rivers Conservancy Consortium is a new conservancy. The Refuge and Reserve has a long history working with the State Coastal Conservancy, they have funded many of our major programs and there is still a question as to how those two conservancies will interact, hopefully harmoniously. The Refuge Manager thinks the intent is all positive we want to bring more money here. It will probably be 3 years before they are up and running, as far as funding projects.

iv. Eddie Owens has taken a position as the Refuge Manager for Deer Platt National Wildlife Refuge near Boise, Idaho.

v. The Refuge has been collaborating with the City of Imperial Beach on this stretch of the project along I.B. Blvd. The area at 3rd Street and I.B. Blvd. is also being improved and the city is contributing funding to the project in exchange for some land. Complimentary to the I.B. Blvd. project is the replacement of the deck near 3rd and I.B. Blvd. and the finalization of interpretive panels off of Seacoast Drive.

vi. The Research Coordinator and Refuge Manager are working with Dr. Karilyn Sant. She is a new professor at SDSU in the Dept. of Public Health and works closely with Dr. Rick Gersberg. We are conceptualizing a program using modern genomic techniques to detect and track pathogens in the water here in the river valley. We are exploring ways to expand NOAA’s existing monitoring program to include parameters that are contained in this system so we can get a data set to describe what kind of contaminants there are and what they are doing to the microbiology. It has been a gap in the data for a while but with emerging technology and someone who is excited about pursuing this area of research, we have an opportunity to learn what is happening.
Discussion ensued around the various possible treatment and actions that are being considered in the work on the transboundary flows.

Jeff Crooks – Research Report – TRNERR

i. The Reserve held a Research Symposium in August. One branch of NOAA, NCCOS (National Center for Coastal Ocean Science) funds projects distributed across the country, the Reserve is fortunate to have three NCCOS projects focused on the Tijuana River. One is the SEDRise project led by UC Irvine to look at transboundary sediment flows. The second is Marshes on the Margins lead by the Coastal Conservancy, about sea level rise in marshes and restoration. The third is one the Research Coordinator is involved in, looking at hypoxia in marshes. The symposium enabled stakeholders to present on a variety of projects all in one meeting. The Reserve probably should do a better job about highlighting on-site research.

ii. The Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program (TETRP) is in its third phase, the first being the tidal linkage, the second the 20 acre model marsh and in this third phase, we are looking at up to 80 acres. Now we are in the final design, engineering & permitting, and selected a consultant to do the environmental documents for it. We still need to find funding and it is going to be expensive, in the 10’s of millions of dollars for that 80 acres. The date for actual implementation depends on money. It may have to be a line item in a bond act. The project is one solution for the health of the system and keeping the river mouth open.

iii. The Reserve is doing restoration monitoring in Los Peñasquitos Lagoon, the South San Diego Bay and the Salt Ponds and the TETRP site in the Border Field area. This northern arm is monitored by a group out of UC Santa Barbara and is a mitigation site for the San Dieguito Lagoon marsh restoration. They monitor the northern part of the estuary here and the Reserve monitors the southern part. Haven’t really looked at the data yet. The Research Program has been tracking the warm water species, things that would normally only appear during an El Niño year and now seem to be showing up every year. Examples of what we are seeing are the Mexican brown shrimp, blue crab, longtail goby and the new tropical fiddler crab. We are looking for signs of tropicalization and warming waters.

Marya Ahmad – Education Report – TRNERR

i. The Reserve now has a third person in the Education Department, Cassidy Walker, she was hired at the beginning of September. She works for California State Parks and SWIA, so in addition to her education duties with school groups, she is also helping with research, field monitoring and is participating in other training opportunities.

ii. The Education Coordinator attended a training program called PORTS that focuses on online resources for teachers. It helped us launch Skype in the Classroom which is a platform that enables educators to link up and share their online programs live with students in the classroom. The Education Dept with the help of our Southern Service Center developed our first online program called “Detecting a Changing Climate at the Tijuana Estuary.” It went live and now teachers can book an online field trip.
iii. The Education Dept. just wrapped up the Speaker Series for the year and will be resuming in February 2020.

iv. Finally, our Sunday Bird Walks have changed from 3:00PM to 10:00AM.

Kristen Goodrich – Coastal Training Program Report – TRNERR

i. Months ago CTP held a workshop with Chris Helmer of the City of Imperial Beach, to look at opportunities for water conservation and reuse around the 13th Street corridor. CTP is now in the final months of that partnership and thank you to Chris for being at the table through the process. The CTP Coordinator would like to start a planning process for water conservation and reuse at our California State Park facilities.

ii. The issue of water conservation and green infrastructure is also a concern that is shared by the Reserve’s partners in Tijuana. CTP did a needs assessment to look at the types of training and technical assistance that partners in Tijuana were looking to obtain, and conservation and green infrastructure rose to the top. CTP is in the process of working with partners at NOAA’s Office of Coastal Management to bring down trainers for a training in Ensenada in February 2020. This is at a time that there is a new government with new people and therefore more receptivity to the training.

iii. In March 2020, the Reserve’s Binational Liaison Ana Eguiarte, in partnership with the City of Tijuana and other stakeholders, will be putting on a workshop on the relationship between marine debris and flooding with funding from the NOAA Marine Debris Grant. If we can look at opportunities in reducing trash and improving waste management services in Tijuana, the Tijuana River Valley will see co-benefits.

iv. Finally, the Reserve had the amazing opportunity to host BMW Foundation’s Global Table in the spring. The tables have been held all around the world with people coming together to talk about issues related to the United Nations’ sustainable goals. The CTP Coordinator was able to attend the table in Berlin and hopes to bring some of the ideas to work here at the Reserve.


i. Bronti Patterson, former Stewardship Associate, accepted a position at the City of Oceanside.

ii. This year marked the 10th Annual Tijuana River Action Month (TRAM), which was held for four weeks between September 14th and October 5th. A total of 13 TRAM events were held on both sides of the border which included cleanups, a tour, habitat restoration events, and environmental workshops. Partial funding for these efforts came from NOAA Marine Debris grants. 2019 TRAM numbers at a glance: 827 volunteers / 5,541 pounds of trash removed / 10 Acres of land improved. Joint effort among Reserve programs.

iii. ERRG, the contractor for the Goat Canyon Sediment Basins is actively working in the upper basin. Approximately 18,300 CY of sediment were excavated and stockpiled at the primary processing pad for screening and approximately 580 CY of vegetation/invasives were removed. The trash boom cleanout is scheduled for later this month, along with removal of the remaining material from the area adjacent the trash boom.
iv. John Boland, biologist who works in TRV riparian areas, is conducting surveys this week to continue looking at impacts of Kuroshio shot-hole borer beetle. Initial observations look promising, seeming to indicate that willows might be developing a resistance toward the beetle.


vi. TRNERR hosted our Sister Estuary from San Jose del Cabo. The delegation from the Municipality of Los Cabos included Mayor Armida Castro-Guzman and four departmental aides. This was an information exchange which included a tour of our Reserve to share some of our programs and challenges, followed by a working meeting to address some challenges to the San Jose del Cabo Estuary. The meeting included Paul Ganster (SDSU Institute for Regional Studies of the Californias), Denise Moreno Ducheny (Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies at UCSD), Mayor Serge Dedina, Paloma Aguirre, and Chris Helmer (City of Imperial Beach), and Mike McCoy (SWIA).

F. New Business

a. Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration program (REPI)
   i. Anna Shepherd, US Navy, presented on the Department of Defense’s Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration program.
      - Contact Anna if interested in REPI Challenge, or partnering and eligibility for project funding through REPI.

b. Nelson Sloan Quarry Restoration Project
   i. Lorena Warner-Lara, TRNERR, provided a project update and presented on the benefits of the project to the river valley.
      - Written comments/ testimonials for “water story” by December 2, 2019.

G. General Public Comment:

Jill Terp - USFWS

Q: (for CTP) Your training or outreach around stopping trash at the source in Tijuana, is that an exportable program that can be brought to other cities, such as Chula Vista or Imperial Beach?

A: Kristen Goodrich - Some aspects are transferrable, some are not as they are specifically targeted at the government structure there. We had an enormous success through CTP in supporting efforts to ban plastic bags in Tijuana. There have been lessons learned in that process that could support other cities here locally.
H. **Future Agenda Considerations**

None were given. Please email Lorena Warner-Lara, lorena.warner-lara@parks.ca.gov, with any future agenda items.

I. **Adjourned at 3:00pm**

**TRNERR MEETINGS FOR Advisory Council – TRNERR Training Center @1pm**

Future TRNERR Advisory Council dates:
- February 4, 2020
- May 5, 2020

TRNERR Trails Committee meeting dates (9-11am):
- February 18, 2020
- May 19, 2020